

REMARKS

By this Amendment, Applicants cancel claims 17 and 23 without prejudice or disclaimer of their subject matter. Claims 9, 10 and 16 remain pending.

In the Office Action mailed January 26, 2005, the Examiner allowed claims 9, 10, and 16, and rejected claims 17 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,172,657 to *Kamakura et al.* in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,570,566 to *Yoshigahara*.

Applicants respectfully traverse the Examiner's rejection of claims 17 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). However, to expedite prosecution of this case, Applicants have canceled claims 17 and 23. The rejection of claims 17 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is therefore moot. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the subject matter contained in claims 17 and 23 at a later time in another application, such as a continuing application, or in the present application.

Accordingly, pending claims 9, 10 and 16 stand allowed and Applicants respectfully request timely issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 

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